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PSYX 531.01: Principles of Psychological Intervention

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Psychology 531

Principles of Psychological Intervention

Fall 2014



"So, Mr. Fenton . . . Let's begin with your mother."

Course Location and Time

CPC 119

Thursday 9:10am – 12:00pm

Instructor Information

Instructor: Laura Kirsch, Ph.D.

Office: Skaggs 364

Office hours: By appointment

Email: laura.kirsch@umontana.edu

Phone: 406-243-6817 (Office) or 406-207-7870 (Cell)

Course Description

In this course, the philosophical and scientific bases of major systems of psychotherapy are reviewed and psychotherapy research methods, issues, and findings are introduced.

In particular, we will be discussing the major theoretical paradigms of psychosocial treatment (psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, experiential, and systemic), with a focus on approaches and interventions that have strong empirical support. We will examine the current scientific literature bearing on whether and how these treatments work, as well as more general methodological principles and problems in intervention research.

Educational Goals

By the end of this course, you should:

- Have a detailed knowledge of the major models of psychological intervention and an ability to articulate how the models are similar and different from each other.
- Have an understanding of the psychotherapy outcome literature with respect to which treatments work and how we know, as well as the mechanisms of change in psychotherapy.
- Be able to analyze the scientific literature with respect to psychological interventions, in order to determine the effectiveness of a particular treatment approach.
- Be able to describe specific evidence-based interventions and approaches in terms of the basic concepts of the approach, the therapeutic process, the client-therapist relationship, and the specific procedures used, and indicate how the approach would be used to treat a particular disorder or client presentation.
- Be able to apply your knowledge of psychological interventions to your own clinical work.

Required Readings

There is no text book for this course. ***Instead, readings will be in the form of journal articles and academic book chapters. All readings will be posted electronically on the course website***, organized by due date. The list of assigned readings and their due dates is listed below. You are expected to read the assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss them. One student will be responsible for leading the discussion each week, described in more detail below.

Student Evaluation

Class Participation

Because this is a small graduate seminar, student attendance and participation is essential. You are expected to attend every class meeting, having read the assigned articles, and prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade comprises 20% of your total course grade, and is based upon general attendance, preparedness, the quality (not quantity) of your comments, questions, and contributions, and general attentiveness. Unexcused absences from ***more than one class*** during the semester and/or frequent tardiness will result in points being deducted from your participation grade.

Presentation of Readings

In order to facilitate discussion during class meetings, as well as to encourage critical thinking about the material, students will take turns presenting the assigned readings to the class. Each week one student will be responsible for presenting a summary of each reading due and leading the discussion on the readings. Your reading presentation grade comprises 20% of your total course grade.

Discussion Questions

To better enable us to think about and discuss the topics each week, each student in the class is required to submit a general discussion question stimulated by the readings. A good discussion question does more than request information or clarification; it raises issues, examines implications, challenges assumptions, and juxtaposes ideas. This question should then serve as a jumping-off point for class discussion. *Discussion questions should be emailed to me no later than 8pm on Wednesday evenings when there are assigned readings due.* Your discussion question grade counts 15% toward your total course grade.

Clinical Case Formulation

Students will be expected to apply their understanding of the interventions discussed in class to a current therapy client by developing a written case conceptualization. More details about this assignment will be provided in a separate document. In general, for this assignment, you will choose a client you are currently working with and conceptualize his/her symptoms, personality characteristics, cognitions, feelings, and behaviors in light of a particular theory or integration of theories. You will then formulate counseling goals and intervention strategies for this client based on your conceptualization. **This assignment is due on October 30th** and is worth 20% of your course grade.

Research Paper and Presentation

You will be expected to choose a particular area of psychotherapy that interests you and conduct a detailed literature review of the topic to help cultivate an area of expertise in psychotherapy research. The goal is to develop your own view of the current state of knowledge with respect to the treatment of a specific problem or set of problems. For this paper, you will do a literature search on the topic and select articles to read, which you will then incorporate into a 12-15 page review paper. You must meet with me to discuss your chosen topic by 10/2. **Papers are due on Thursday 12/11.**

You will also be required to present your research findings to the class by giving a 20-minute Powerpoint presentation summarizing the main points from your review paper. To accompany the presentation, you will be asked to select an article for your classmates to read that best captures the relevant information on the topic. **Presentations will be given on the last day of class (12/4). Papers and presentations will count 25% toward your total course grade.**

Grading

Points toward your final course grade will be counted as follows:

Class Participation	20%
Presentation of Readings	20%
Discussion Questions	15%
Case Conceptualization	20%
Research Paper and Presentation	25%

Total: 100%

Course Website

Materials for the course will be available on the internet through Moodle, including all assigned readings. Class announcements and assignments will also be posted when necessary, so please check the website on a regular basis. In addition to checking Moodle, you are also responsible for checking your UM email regularly, as you may receive course-related emails from time to time.

Course Guidelines and Policies

Missed Classes

In the event of a lateness or absence from class, you are responsible for the material covered, including lecture notes, discussion content, videos watched, assignments and announcements. Announcements and copies of handouts will be posted on Moodle; lecture notes should be obtained from a classmate, or (for excusable absences) from the instructor during office hours.

The Learning Environment

I would like this class to have a relaxed atmosphere where students can feel free to ask questions and comment on the material being presented and discussed. Please do not hesitate to ask for clarification on a topic, to ask about related material, to raise an interesting point, or to discuss a relevant personal experience. However, remember that not everyone has similar viewpoints, and some students might have personal experiences with particular disorders, so please be respectful of your classmates and their opinions. Another way to create a respectful and productive learning environment is to ensure that it is free from distractions. Therefore, please turn off your cell phones and other personal electronic devices prior to coming to class. If I see you using these devices during class, I will deduct points from your class participation grade.

Disability Modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to adhere to the University of Montana's [Student Conduct Code](#) with regard to academic integrity. Academic misconduct in this course will result in an academic penalty commensurate with the offense as well as possible disciplinary action by the university.

Add/Drop Deadline

Please take note of important registration dates listed in the Fall academic calendar. October 28th is the last day to drop classes with an add/drop form. After that date, no petitions to drop the course will be signed and no Incompletes will be given except in documentable emergency situations.

Feedback

I hope to make this an enjoyable learning experience for everyone in the class. If you have any suggestions as to how to improve the class, please feel free to give me constructive feedback.

Course Calendar

Class Meeting Dates	Topic Covered and Assignment Due Dates
Week 1: 8/28	Introduction
Week 2: 9/4	The Past, Present and Future of Clinical Psychological Science/ The Empirically Supported Treatments Debate
Week 3: 9/11	Psychotherapy Outcome Research
Week 4: 9/18	Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
Week 5: 9/25	Behavioral Approaches
Week 6: 10/2	Cognitive Approaches
Week 7: 10/9	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Week 8: 10/16	Experiential Therapies
Week 9: 10/23	Interpersonal Psychotherapy
Week 10: 10/30	Family Systems Therapy <i>Case conceptualization due on 10/30</i>
Week 11: 11/6	Relapse Prevention

Class Meeting Dates	Topic Covered and Assignment Due Dates
Week 12: 11/13	Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing
Week 13: 11/20	<i>Case conceptualizations/ Interventions That Harm</i>
Week 14: 11/27	No Class: Thanksgiving Break
Week 15: 12/4	Course Wrap-Up and Student Presentations
Thursday, 12/11	<i>Final Paper Due</i>